

REMARKS

Claims 1, 3, 5-15, 17, 19-27, 29, 31-38, 40, 42-45, 47, and 49-74 are pending in the application. Claims 1, 3, 15, 17, 27, 29, 32, 38, 40, 45, 47, 50-61, and 74 have been amended. Claims 2, 4, 16, 18, 28, 30, 39, 41, 46, and 48 have been canceled. Claims 8-14 and 63-65 have been withdrawn from consideration.

In the Office Action, claims 1-3, 5-7, 15-17, 19-40, 42-47, 49-62, and 66-74 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,942,356 (Mitsui) in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,725,739 (Hu) or U.S. Patent No. 6,458,255 (Chang). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection for at least the following reasons.

Regarding the rejection of independent claims 1, 15, 27, 38, 45, 60 and 61, these claims have each been amended to incorporate all the limitations of one of dependent claims 4, 18, 41 or 48, which were indicated to contain allowable subject matter. In particular, independent claim 1 has been amended to include all the limitations of claim 4 and intervening claim 2. Independent claim 15 has been amended to include all the limitations of claim 18 and intervening claim 16. Independent claim 27 has been amended to include all the limitations of claim 30 (which has all the limitations of allowable claim 48) and intervening claim 28. Independent claim 38 has been amended to include all the limitations of claim 41 and intervening claim 39. Independent claim 45 has been amended to include all the limitations of claim 48 and intervening claim 46. Likewise, independent claims 60 and 61 have been amended to include all the limitations of allowable claims 4, 18, 41 and 48. Claims 2, 4, 16, 18, 28, 30, 39, 41, 46, and 48 have consequently been canceled.

Thus, amended independent claims 1, 15, 27, 38, 45, 60 and 61 contain allowable subject matter, and are therefore allowable.

Consequently, independent claims 1, 15, 27, 38, 45, 60 and 61 are patentable, as are claims 3, 5-7, 17, 19-26, 29, 31-37, 40, 42-44, 47, and 49-59, 62 and 66-74, which depend from claims 1, 15, 27, 38, 45 and 61, respectively.

Accordingly, it is believed that all pending claims are now in condition for allowance. Applicants therefore respectfully request an early and favorable reconsideration and allowance of this application. If there are any outstanding issues which might be resolved by an interview or an Examiner's amendment, the Examiner is invited to call Applicants' representative at the telephone number shown below.

To the extent necessary, a petition for an extension of time under 37 C.F.R. 1.136 is hereby made. Please charge any shortage in fees due in connection with the filing of this paper, including extension of time fees, to Deposit Account 500417 and please credit any excess fees to such deposit account.

Respectfully submitted,

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